

Spotted beebalm

(*Monarda punctata*)

For definitions of botanical terms, visit en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_botanical_terms.

Spotted beebalm (also known as Dotted horsemint) is a robust, aromatic wildflower that occurs naturally along roadsides and in meadows, pinelands, and disturbed sites. It typically blooms late spring through fall, attracting a huge variety of pollinating insects, including bees, wasps, and butterflies. In winter, it dies back to the ground (in South Florida, to a basal rosette).

Its flowers are inconspicuous, hairy, and whitish yellow with purplish spots. Often mistaken for the flower are its showy, leaflike bracts that subtend its tiny flowers. Bracts vary in color from pink to lavender or purple and often have yellowish-green tips and undersides. Flowers are born in elongated spikes and arranged in whorls. Leaves are petiolate and pubescent with toothed margins. They are oppositely arranged. Stems are pubescent, erect, and square, like most members of the mint family. Seeds are born in nutlets at the base of each flower.

Spotted beebalm is high in thymol, which has antimicrobial, antifungal, and antiseptic properties and was used historically to treat ringworm and hookworm infections. When crushed, the leaves emit an oregano-like scent. The leaves can be brewed into a mild tea that is said to promote relaxation.

Family: Lamiaceae (Mint family)

Native range: Nearly throughout Florida

To see where natural populations of Spotted beebalm have been vouchered, visit www.florida.plantatlas.usf.edu.

Lifespan: Perennial

Soil: Dry to moist, well-drained soils

Exposure: Full sun to partial shade

Growth habit: 2–4' tall

Propagation: Seed

Florida regions of landscape suitability: North, Central, South

Garden tips: Spotted beebalm has a long bloom time and can be a nice addition to a home landscape. Enjoy watching the diversity of pollinators it attracts.

Spotted beebalm is available from nurseries that specialize in Florida native plants. Visit www.PlantRealFlorida.org to find a nursery in your area. Seeds may be available from the Florida Wildflower Growers Cooperative at www.FloridaWildflowers.com

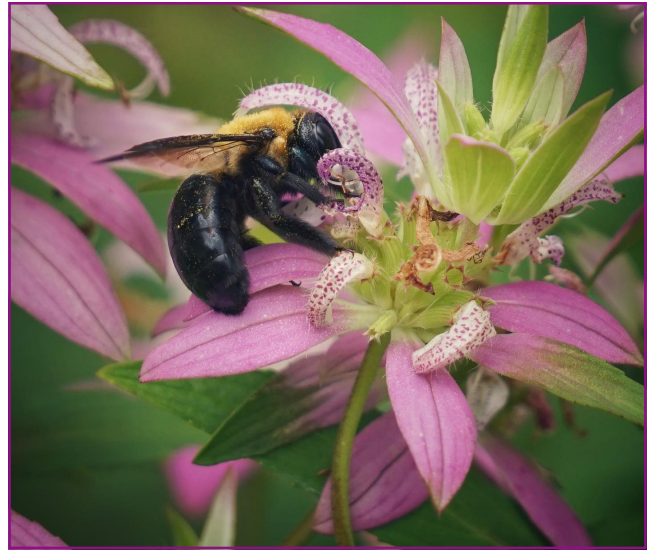


Photo by Emily Bell

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